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**Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services**

# Review of the organizational framework of the public information function of the Secretariat

## Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

**"Public information activities were undertaken by 2,113 Secretariat-affiliated staff members"**

*Summary*

Public information is a cross-cutting function Secretariat-wide, involving all activities that raise public awareness of the ideals, activities, goals and accomplishments of the United Nations. The function, which was undertaken from the funding of the United Nations by the Department of Public Information, has expanded over time to include other programmes, offices, departments and missions in the course of promoting their respective mandates and related activities.

The present review of the organizational framework of the public information function of the Secretariat was mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/236. The Secretary-General ultimately requested the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to undertake the review. The objective of the review was to assess, as systematically and objectively as possible, the organizational framework of the public information function of the Secretariat, including the resources dedicated to that sphere of work. The review provides information for the Assembly and the Secretariat to consider with regard to achieving increased coordination and efficiencies in the allocation of resources as well as a descriptive analysis of the function, including main activities, coordination and dedicated resources. The review included all departments of the Secretariat and all duty stations, field missions and entities subject to OIOS oversight.

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The review was undertaken in accordance with the evaluation norms and standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group. OIOS utilized a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, and the results of the review were derived from documentary, testimonial, observational and analytical evidence. In addition to the Department of Public Information, 64 focal points were assigned Secretariat-wide to the work of obtaining primary data.

The review revealed that there are a total of 2,113 posts, that is, the equivalent of 4 per cent of the total staff of the Secretariat, dedicated to the public information function Secretariat-wide. The majority of these posts, 74 per cent or 1,571 posts, were located at offices away from Headquarters, for example at field missions. The level of posts varied, with 45 per cent of the total in the General Service category; 23 per cent in the Field Service, Local level, National Officer and United Nations Volunteers categories; almost 30 per cent in the Professional category; almost 2 per cent at the level of Director; and 1 post at the level of Under-Secretary-General for the Head of the Department of Public Information. Entities reported that an additional 130 posts in both the General Service and Professional categories are responsible for public information activities in addition to main job functions.

Public information posts are funded from different budgetary sources, with the majority of funding coming from the regular budget (48.3 per cent), and the rest from the peacekeeping budget (38.9 per cent); extrabudgetary resources (12.4 per cent) and the peacekeeping support account (0.4 per cent). In addition, non-post (financial) resources of approximately $50 million from all funding sources Secretariat-wide were utilized for public information activities for a variety of purposes such as television and video production, translation and website maintenance.

The capacity and dedicated size of public information offices differed throughout the Secretariat. Three types of arrangements exist for the public information function within entities other than the Department of Public Information itself: 45 have a dedicated office for the function; 8 have public information staff but no dedicated office; 11 have no dedicated office or public information staff and usually have other staff undertaking public information activities as part of other duties, with assistance from the Department of Public Information or related United Nations Information Services or United Nations information centres when closely located. Most substantive entities have dedicated offices for public information while non-substantive entities do not unless required for a specific project.

A broad range of public information activities are undertaken Secretariat-wide using many different tools and approaches. Most activities fall within the strategic communications, news and media and outreach categories.

The focus of all coordination efforts was on preventing the duplication of work, saving time and ensuring a common message. Coordination was carried out in three ways:

- Formally system-wide by the United Nations Communications Group, established in 2002 with 191 principal members from the Secretariat, the specialized agencies, programmes and funds;
- Informally Secretariat-wide between entities and the Department of Public Information, including the Department's regular support to Secretariat "client" departments; although the Department is the main entity dedicated to

public information it does not have a mandated role for coordinating that function within the Secretariat;

- Through other ad hoc informal networks.

The coordination provided by the United Nations Communications Group, and informally otherwise, was viewed as efficient by focal points that it prevented the duplication of work, saved time and ensured a common message. All focal points noted the importance of coordinated public information in ensuring a unified presentation of the work of the United Nations. Focal points noted that there were two main factors that challenged the coordination of the public information function in the Secretariat: (a) the lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of the function; and (b) the absence of a strategic plan that maps out the direction and priorities.

The review highlighted the fact that the organizational framework of the public information function is larger than the original Department established for that role. Given the decentralized structure of public information activities Secretariat-wide, resources dedicated to the function and the challenges to coordination, it was clearly time to review the approach to the framework in order to determine an overall vision, the roles of the respective entities involved and the amount of coordination desired. The present report contains the recommendation of OIOS to the Department of Public Information in that regard.

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# I. Introduction

1. From September 2010 to February 2011 pursuant to a mandate from the General Assembly in its resolution 62/236, and at the request of the Secretary-General, the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) undertook a review of the organizational framework of the public information function of the Secretariat.

2. The objective of the review was to assess, as systematically and objectively as possible, the organizational framework of the public information function of the Secretariat, including the resources dedicated to it. The present report provides information for the General Assembly and Secretariat to consider with regard to achieving increased coordination and efficiencies in resource allocation in this area. It also provides a descriptive analysis of the structure of the public information function, its main activities and the coordination efforts and resources dedicated to it within the Secretariat for the biennium 2010-2011. The review included all Secretariat departments, as well as duty stations, field missions and entities subject to OIOS oversight.

3. Public information is a cross-cutting function. For the purpose of the present review, public information has been broadly defined in order to ensure the inclusion of all types of activities undertaken by the Secretariat, ranging from press releases to radio broadcasting. The definition, which was based on a synthesis of various statements of the General Assembly regarding its purpose, function and dissemination, encompasses any activity which raises public awareness of the ideals, issues, activities, aims and accomplishments of the United Nations and promotes an informed understanding of its work and purposes among the peoples of the world using both traditional and new media.[1]

4. The report incorporates comments received from focal points assigned Secretariat-wide as well as from the Department of Public Information during the drafting process. Final comments from the Department of Public Information, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts are appended, in full, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/263 (see annex II). OIOS expresses its appreciation for the cooperation extended by the Department of Public Information and the focal points assigned to work on the review.

# II. Background

## Role of public information at the United Nations

5. Since the establishment of the United Nations, public information has played a vital role in communicating to the peoples of the world the broad goals of the United Nations, including the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of friendly relations among nations and the promotion of social progress, better living standards and human rights. At a basic level, it involves disseminating information about activities being undertaken towards these overall

[1] See General Assembly resolutions, including 13 (I), and the most recent resolution on public information, 64/96, sects. A and B.

goals and supporting operational goals in terms of the specific mandates of field missions. It also includes promoting durable and sustainable goodwill and support for the work of the Organization. The only caveat placed on the role of the public information function has been the requirement to keep some information out of the public domain owing to concerns for security and diplomatic sensitivity. The Secretary-General's bulletin, entitled, "Information sensitivity, classification and handling", issued in 2007, acknowledges that the work of the United Nations should be open and transparent, except insofar as the nature of information concerned is deemed confidential in accordance with certain guidelines set out therein.[2]

## Department of Public Information

6. The first United Nations entity with responsibility for public information, the Department of Public Information, was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 13 (I) in 1946 as one of the eight principal units of the Secretariat. In creating the Department, the Assembly noted that "the United Nations cannot achieve its purposes unless the peoples of the world are fully informed of its aims and activities". The Department's work is guided by Assembly priorities and by its subsidiary body, the Committee on Information, through resolutions relating to questions on information. The Secretary-General reports annually in three separate reports on the Department's activities to that Committee.

7. The mission of the Department of Public Information is to assist in fulfilling the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating on its activities through the provision of accurate, impartial, comprehensive, balanced, timely and relevant information to the public, with the greatest transparency and public impact, in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization.

8. The Department of Public Information has three divisions: the Strategic Communications Division; the News and Media Division; and the Outreach Division. The Department is based at Headquarters in New York, but also works through a network of 63 bureaux worldwide, which are part of the Strategic Communications Division. These are comprised of: two United Nations Information Services at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna; 52 United Nations information centres in Africa, the Americas, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels; and eight United Nations offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Eritrea, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The core functions of these bureaux are to promote public understanding and support for the United Nations by disseminating information and organizing activities and events in cooperation with local media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and other local partners. They also provide feedback to Headquarters on national, regional and local media coverage of United Nations activities of relevance to the Organization.

9. For administrative purposes the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General is included within the budget of the Department of Public Information, including funding for staffing and travel to accompany the Secretary-General. This

[2] ST/SGB/2007/6.

arrangement means that the post and non-post resources of that Office are part of budget section 27. The Spokesperson's core functions include handling the Secretary-General's relations with the news media, explaining the policies and the work of the United Nations to the global media through daily briefings, interviews and background discussions and travelling with the Secretary-General. The Spokesperson reports directly and works closely with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and performs its functions in coordination with the Department.

## Other public information activities

10. While the Department of Public Information has the primary mandate for public information, other departments, offices and field missions also undertake public information activities to promote their respective mandates and related programming. Public information is carried out both by substantive entities, which undertake the work mandated under the three main pillars of the United Nations system, security, development and human rights, and non-substantive entities, which undertake internal administrative work.

11. These entities work independently from the Department of Public Information on public information activities and have in-house capacity either fully or partly dedicated to their respective public information functions. The Department does work with these entities, however, in providing ad hoc formal and informal guidance on various issues, including specific communications campaigns and priorities of the Secretary-General. At Headquarters, the Department works with substantive departments in a "client" relationship, with regular meetings at the senior and working levels to discuss public information and communications priorities. The priorities of the substantive department are incorporated into the annual communication priorities document and disseminated to the United Nations information centres, peacekeeping missions and resident coordinators. The Department works closely with entities in the United Nations system to deliver effective and targeted information programmes on key topics, including information on global conferences and observances.

## Formal system-wide coordination mechanism

12. The main consultative and coordinating mechanism for public information of the United Nations system is the United Nations Communications Group, which was formed in January 2002 to replace the Joint United Nations Information Committee. The Communications Group was formed as a flexible and substance-driven mechanism for inter-agency coordination in public information, providing a common communications forum system-wide. It has 191 principal members from the Secretariat, the specialized agencies and the United Nations programmes and funds. The Department of Public Information acts as the secretariat of the Communications Group and the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information acts as its Chair.

13. The role of the United Nations Communications Group is to: provide general policy advice on public information matters of common interest; carry out jointly planned public information operations, including the establishment of cooperative arrangements for special projects and events; facilitate practical experience sharing;

and foster efficient information services, including the shared use of facilities and resources.

14. The main activities of the United Nations Communications Group include: the organization of weekly meetings at Headquarters to discuss issues of importance to the entities of the United Nations system; the establishment of task forces to develop and implement communications strategies for priority issues, campaigns or upcoming conferences and other events; and the holding of annual sessions for broad-ranging discussions and policy formulation on general and specific communications and public information issues. All of the activities organized by the Communications Group serve to promote a common sense of purpose within the information community of the United Nations system.

15. Since 2006, the United Nations Communications Group has operated 102 country-level groups at offices away from Headquarters, working with the communications focal points of all United Nations offices operating in those countries. In post-conflict countries and countries in crisis, this work also includes peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions and specific missions for humanitarian emergencies. The focus of such work at the country level is on strengthening inter-agency cooperation in public information and communications and increasing the media profile of United Nations activities at the national and regional levels. Country-level communications groups are chaired by the Director of the local United Nations information centre or, in the absence of an information centre, by the senior Information Officer of another United Nations agency, oftentimes the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or a peacekeeping mission.

## III. Methodology

16. The review mandated by the General Assembly was undertaken in accordance with the evaluation norms and standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group. The results of the review were derived from a combination of documentary, testimonial, observational and analytical evidence. In its work, OIOS utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, obtaining data from the following seven sources:

(a) A review of relevant mandates, strategic frameworks, the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS) and related performance reports, parliamentary documentation, guidelines, policies, manuals, and relevant materials relating to the public information activities of the United Nations;

(b) A structured analysis of data received from all focal points assigned to the review pertaining to the public information function at their respective entities, including post and non-post resources fully and partially allocated to it; the structural placement of the function within the entities; activities undertaken; and guidance received or issued on the function;

(c) Semi-structured interviews with 141 assigned focal points,[3] key members of senior management of the Department of Public Information; substantive management staff; and public information staff in the field;

[3] Focal points assigned by the entities were generally public information professionals.

(d) A web-based self-administered survey distributed to the 65 review focal points;[4]

(e) Direct observation of the meetings of the United Nations Communications Group at Headquarters;

(f) Field missions to the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission and the United Nations Information Centre in Dakar;[5]

(g) A review of public information functions and post resources at the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNDP.

17. The resources analysed for the review were taken from: the regular budget for the biennium 2010-2011; the peacekeeping and support account budget for the period from 1 July to 30 June 2011; and the special political mission budgets for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2010.

18. The review had a limitation regarding data obtained on partially dedicated posts since such information was reported by the related entities themselves, with varying interpretations of who undertook partial activities and what constituted public information. This affected the comparability of the data. To address this limitation, OIOS triangulated data from multiple sources to support the results.

## IV. Results

19. Data on posts and non-post resources, other than that provided for the Department of Public Information and for peacekeeping missions, for public information Secretariat-wide was unavailable and/or unclearly marked in budget fascicles. For that reason, OIOS collected data on relevant post and non-post resources through a formal document request.

### A. Secretariat-wide, 2,113 posts and nearly $50 million in non-post resources were dedicated to public information activities

20. Public information activities were undertaken by 2,113 Secretariat-affiliated staff members, as shown in table 1 by location of posts. The number of posts comprised 4 per cent of the total number of staff Secretariat-wide.[6] Further

[4] The survey was sent to 60 focal points (five focal points were assigned at a later stage during the review); 43 responded, yielding a 71.6 per cent response rate.

[5] Sites were selected based on a mapping of the size, scope and function of offices and field missions undertaking public information activities as well as input from the Department of Public Information, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

[6] See A/65/350. The figures used for total number of staff, including the Secretariat and related entities (the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) as of 30 June 2010 is 51,433.

information is contained in annex I, which presents a summary of all entities with overall number of posts and levels for each entity.

Table 1

**Total number of posts assigned to public information activities at the Secretariat and related entities by location**

| *Location* | *Number of posts* |
|---|---|
| Headquarters, New York | 542 |
| United Nations information centres and field offices[a] | 261 |
| United Nations offices[b] | 43 |
| Regional commissions | 38 |
| Offices away from Headquarters | 252 |
| International Tribunals | 47 |
| Peacekeeping missions | 823 |
| Special political missions | 99 |
| Other related entities | 17 |
| **Total**[c] | **2 113** |

*Source*: Compiled by OIOS based on data provided by entities.

[a] These posts are part of the budget of the Department of Public Information; the Department commented that this includes 72 non-public information staff.

[b] These posts are part of the budget of the Department of Public Information for the United Nations Information Services and for visitor services at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna and the United Nations Information Centre in Nairobi.

[c] To avoid double counting the total reflects the subtraction of 6 posts that belong to the Department of Public Information at the United Nations Information Centre at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and 3 posts at the United Nations Information Centre in Beirut.

21. The majority of all public information posts, 1,571 posts (74 per cent), were located away from Headquarters. The majority, 823 posts, were in peacekeeping missions, accounting for the largest number of public information posts in the Secretariat (38 per cent). The peacekeeping missions with the largest number of posts were:

(a) United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO): 237 posts;

(b) United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS): 167 posts;

(c) United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH): 104 posts;

(d) United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI): 121 posts.

22. Special political missions had 99 posts, a substantially smaller number compared to peacekeeping missions. The special political missions with the largest number of posts were those administered by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations:

(a) United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA): 44 posts;

(b) United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI): 18 posts.

23. Some special political missions had only one officer in charge of public information for the mission; these included UNOWA; the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL); and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL).

24. Other Secretariat offices based away from Headquarters accounted for 252 posts. The largest number of posts were at entities with wide networks of country offices and a greater reliance on extrabudgetary sources:

(a) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): 112 posts;

(b) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): 55 posts;

(c) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): 29 posts;

(d) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): 28 posts.

25. Twenty-five per cent, or 542 posts, were located at Headquarters, most within the Department of Public Information (484). The other main departments/offices with a significant number of public information posts were:

(a) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: 21 posts;

(b) Department of Management: 11 posts;

(c) Department of Peacekeeping Operations: 8 posts;

(d) Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Communications and Speechwriting Unit: 7 posts.

26. At Headquarters, five departments and offices (the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Political Affairs, OIOS, the Office of Legal Affairs and the Peacebuilding Support Office) did not have any fully dedicated public information posts, although they did have some posts that were partially dedicated to public information activities.

**Levels of public information posts varied, with the highest levels being located at Headquarters**

27. The level of public information posts varied between categories, with 45 per cent of all 2,113 posts in the General Service category. Almost 30 per cent of the total number of posts were in the Professional category (P-2 to P-5) and almost 2 per cent of the posts were at the level of Director (D-1 and D-2). For field missions, public information posts in the Field Service, Local level, National Officer and United Nations Volunteers categories accounted for 23 per cent of the total number of posts. Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of the total number of public information posts by level.

Table 2
**Total number of public information posts at the Secretariat and related entities by level**

| *Category* | *No. of posts* | *Percentage of posts* |
|---|---|---|
| Director and above | 38 | 1.8 |
| Professional | 625 | 29.5 |
| General Service | 963 | 45.6 |
| Field Service | 65 | 3.1 |
| Local level | 200 | 9.5 |
| National Officers | 200 | 9.5 |
| United Nations Volunteers | 22 | 1.0 |
| **Total** | **2 113** | **100** |

*Source*: Data compiled by OIOS based on data provided by entities.

28. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information held the highest level post fully dedicated to public information in the Secretariat. Most high-level posts were in the Department (3 posts at the D-2 level, 1 D-2 post in the Spokesperson's Office and 20 posts at the D-1 level).[7] In the field, the highest ranking public information officers were at the D-2 level in the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), 7 D-1 posts at peacekeeping missions (UNAMA, UNAMI, UNMIL, UNMIS, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), MONUSCO and MINUSTAH), and P-5 or P-4 posts at the majority of the other missions.[8]

**The majority of public information posts were funded from the regular budget**

29. Public information posts were funded from different budgetary sources, with the regular budget providing the most funding followed by the peacekeeping budget, extrabudgetary funding and lastly the peacekeeping support account.

[7] Of these D-1s, 10 are located at Headquarters, 1 at the United Nations information service in Geneva, 1 at the United Nations information service in Vienna and 8 in different United Nations information centres.

[8] The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) has one National Officer and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia has two General Service staff dedicated to public information.

Table 3
**Total number of public information posts at the Secretariat and related entities by funding source**

| *Funding source* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Regular budget | 48.3 |
| Peacekeeping budget | 38.9 |
| Extrabudgetary | 12.4 |
| Peacekeeping support account | 0.4 |
| **Total** | **100** |

*Source*: Data compiled by OIOS based on data provided by entities.

### An additional 130 posts were reported as partially involved in public information activities Secretariat-wide

30. Twenty-seven of the reporting entities stated that, in addition to fully dedicated public information posts, there were posts partially dedicated to that function; in total there were 130 such posts. These posts were filled by staff in different professional categories who had undertaken additional work in the area of public information. For example, high-level officials or directors would volunteer for public speaking events, in response to media inquiries or other requests. Furthermore, a review of senior management compacts for 2009-2011 revealed that there was a generic formulation regarding the commitment and the responsibility of senior managers to participate in advocating the policies and promoting the image of the Organization. On average, those in such partially dedicated posts spent 40 per cent of their time on public information.

### Non-post (financial) resources of nearly $50 million financed various public information activities

31. In addition to post resources, there were also non-post (financial) resources from all funding sources for public information activities, including for consultants, travel, television and video production, translation, and website maintenance. Eight entities (the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Management, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office to the Special Adviser on Africa, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNIPSIL, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and the United Nations Compensation Commission) indicated no non-post (financial) resources, and over half of the entities provided monetary figures for the non-post resources amounting to nearly $50 million. The level of non-post resources varied from as little as $2,000 (OIOS) to approximately $40 million (Department of Public Information).[9] Half of the focal points indicated that there were no dedicated resources for website maintenance in their respective budgets. Most entities had received technical assistance from the Department of Public Information in developing websites, the cost for the maintenance of which comes from within

[9] The Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts commented that it could not reconcile the numbers of resource levels with the number reflected in the revised appropriation.

existing resources for public information or other information technology staff at each entity.

## B. The structure of the public information function varied Secretariat-wide, with most entities having a direct reporting relationship to senior management

32. Apart from the Department of Public Information, entities of the Secretariat had three types of structural arrangements for the public information function: 45 had a dedicated office for the function; 8 had public information staff but no dedicated office; and 11 had no dedicated office or public information staff. These 11 usually had non-public information staff undertaking public information activities as part of other duties and relied on the Department of Public Information or the nearest United Nations Information Service or United Nations Information Centre to meet their public information needs.

33. Most substantive entities had dedicated offices and were staffed with public information staff members. Non-substantive entities did not have public information capacity or a dedicated office, unless required by a specific project, such as the capital master plan within the Department of Management. Otherwise, staff members located in the front office of the entity typically performed public information activities, as needed. These non-substantive offices also relied either on the Department of Public Information or on a United Nations information centre if located in close proximity.

34. Field missions had dedicated public information offices, with peacekeeping missions having larger staffed offices than special political missions. The size of the office tended to vary according to the size of the mission, with larger peacekeeping missions tending to have more staff in their public information office. Special political missions had smaller offices, oftentimes with only one staff member; most with relatively larger offices were either administered by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNAMA and UNAMI) or had transitioned recently from being a peacekeeping mission (the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and the United Nations Operation in Burundi (BNUB)). In terms of Headquarters support for the field missions, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support had nine posts, including a Public Affairs Section in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Department of Political Affairs, by contrast, had no dedicated office or regular budgeted post at Headquarters, despite public information-related responsibilities, including managing numerous special political missions and good office efforts.

35. A review of Secretary-General bulletins and organizational charts showed a variety of titles, placement and roles of dedicated public information offices. The titles of the public information offices included reference to public information, advocacy, public affairs, external/media relations, outreach and information technology. For example, "public affairs" was referenced by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "outreach" by the Office of Disarmament Affairs, "advocacy" by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

and "communications" by UNEP.[10] Other bodies, such as the Department of Management and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, put more emphasis on the information technology aspect of the function. Notably, while the bulletin on the organization of the Department of Political Affairs places specific emphasis on managing media relations in coordination with the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General and the Department of Public Information, there was no corresponding coordination prescribed in the bulletins of other Secretariat entities. Peacekeeping and special political missions have designated public information offices that focus on public information regarding the mandate of the mission.

36. Furthermore, of the various structural arrangements for public information, 50 had a direct reporting relationship with senior management, reporting to the Under-Secretary-General, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General or an Executive Secretary of one of the entities of the United Nations system.

## C. A broad range of public information activities were undertaken across the Secretariat

### Public information activities fell into four broad categories

37. Public information is a broad function comprising many differing activities beyond the exclusive scope of dedicated public information offices. Official responses to the document request and interview data on the types of activities undertaken yielded a vast array of activities revealing that many different tools and approaches are used in this field of work. Both traditional and new forms of media dissemination were included in the four broad categories of public information:

(a) **Strategic communications**: focuses on formulating communications strategies on priority issues and undertaking communications campaigns to support substantive goals of specific entities and the Organization;

(b) **News and media**: focuses on providing accurate, balanced and, as feasible, customized news and information materials and services, including through radio, television, photography, print and the Internet, to media and other users globally;

(c) **Outreach**: focuses on engaging various audiences such as civil society, Member States and non-governmental organizations to educate and encourage support for the ideals of the Organization;

(d) **Publications**: focuses on providing varied types of publications such as magazines, journals and books on work done in support of the ideals of the Organization.

38. In addition, the regional commissions and the special political and peacekeeping missions were also involved, to varying degrees, in strengthening the individual and institutional capacities of local journalists and media. The common element across all the entities was that the public information activities undertaken focused on the specialized mandate of each entity. In addition, the entities undertook

[10] ST/SGB/2010/9, ST/SGB/2010/4, ST/SGB/2008/8, ST/SGB/2007/7, ST/SGB/2006/13 and ST/SGB/1997/9.

other Secretariat-wide activities on broader communications priorities and campaigns, as feasible.

**Most activities fell within the categories of strategic communications, news and media, and outreach**

39. Entities undertook all public information activities to some extent, but those in the strategic communications, news and media, and outreach categories were the most common. According to the focal point survey, under the three categories, over 80 per cent reported the following activities:

(a) Website content management;

(b) Drafting of press releases;

(c) Seminars, workshops and briefings for external audiences;

(d) Planning and undertaking communications campaigns on specific issues;

(e) Developing messages for public dissemination;

(f) Daily handling of media inquiries.

40. The next most common type of public information activities fell within the news and media, strategic communications and publications categories, with over 70 per cent of the entities reporting the following:

(a) Drafting articles and op-ed pieces;

(b) Website content development;

(c) Media monitoring and internal news review;

(d) Drafting fact sheets;

(e) Brochures and newsletters.

41. Lastly, mid-range frequency of activities, reported in the 50 to 60 per cent range by the entities, fell into the outreach category and involved relations with non-governmental organizations, civil society and Member States.

42. Focal point interview data also highlighted that the range of public information activities in substantive entities was broader than in non-substantive entities. Most substantive entities Secretariat-wide undertook all types of activities according to their respective workplans and mandates. The common focus in all cases was on devising strategic communications to explain the goals, related activities and outputs of their respective mandates to the public. Substantive entities with field operations and large extrabudgetary funding undertook the greatest scope of activities. Likewise, field-based entities usually had their own spokespersons who could call on the assistance of the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, as needed.

43. The more limited activities undertaken by non-substantive entities tended to be discrete tasks, such as media coverage or updating websites with ad hoc guidance from the Department of Public Information or a United Nations information centre, if located nearby, and consultation, as necessary, with senior management at the Secretariat, either the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and/or the Office of Spokesperson for the Secretary-General.

44. Public information activities were mostly undertaken in English and French, the working languages of the Organization. Only official documents were produced in the six official languages. Translation of non-official documents into official languages was completed according to necessity owing to the absence of dedicated resources at each entity. Public information in local languages was also acknowledged by all focal points as taking priority when those languages were not among the six official languages, with the skills of staff members being utilized to carry out the translations.

45. All focal points reported undertaking public information with a gender mainstreaming perspective. Field missions, in particular, were aware of, and active in, incorporating gender mainstreaming into activities, for example, outreach campaigns such as the 16-day campaign to end violence against women and seminar programmes on public information skills in field missions, which were developed in order to address both men and women. It was considered that the limited public information work carried out by administrative entities did not require a gender mainstreaming perspective, given the nature of their work.

## D. The United Nations Communications Group provides formal system-wide coordination of public information while Secretariat-wide coordination is informal

### Frequency of coordination between entities varied

46. Coordination of public information occurred in three ways: formally system-wide through the United Nations Communications Group; informally Secretariat-wide; and through other ad hoc informal networks. The focus of all coordination efforts was to avoid duplication, achieve maximum synergy, ensure a common United Nations message and present "One United Nations".

47. The frequency of coordination among public information functions varied, as illustrated in table 4.

Table 4
**Frequency of coordination between Secretariat entities, the Department of Public Information and other entities of the United Nations system**
(Percentage)

| *Secretariat entities coordinate with* | *Department of Public Information* | *Other Secretariat entities* | *Other entities of the United Nations system* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Always | 21 | 9 | 5 |
| Very often | 21 | 26 | 22 |
| Often | 26 | 17 | 24 |
| Not very often | 31 | 43 | 39 |
| Never | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| No basis for judgement | 0 | 5 | 5 |

*Source*: Focal point survey, OIOS public information review, 2010-2011.

**System-wide coordination by the United Nations Communications Group provided a common platform with varying degrees of participation**

48. All focal points, except one, recognized that the United Nations Communications Group was the system-wide coordinating mechanism for public information. Most focal points (69.7 per cent) reported being members of the Communications Group, while the remaining 30.3 per cent were not members according to the focal point survey. Levels of engagement differed at Headquarters and at the country level. At Headquarters, focal points noted attendance at weekly meetings was not regular but was rather contingent on the relevance of the agenda to an entity's programme of work and available time. Three focal points reported that they had participated in Communications Group task forces for specific events, for example, the 20-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancún, Mexico. At the country level, focal points reported regular attendance at meetings of the Communications Group, with increased engagement when working on common events, such as various international days. The Communications Group has also issued guidance on various public information topics for the purpose of discussing policy issues and agreeing on common responses, programmes of activity and procedures, including standard operating procedures for crisis communications and the ongoing effort on new media guidelines.

**Secretariat-wide coordination is informal owing to the fact that the Department of Public Information does not have a formal mandate for that role**

49. While the Department of Public Information is the main department dedicated to the public information function, providing overall guidance in that regard, it does not have a formal mandate to coordinate public information activities within the Secretariat. The entities of the Secretariat undertook public information activities in a discrete decentralized manner with a focus on their respective mandates. Coordination has been internal at each entity based on an overall strategy and guidance from senior management and substantive departments for specific topics or events.

50. Coordination guidance from Headquarters offices of the various United Nations entities was sought when substantive input was needed. For example, the focal points of peacekeeping and special political missions noted that they sought guidance from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, respectively, as needed, on substantive matters rather than on issues specific to public information. The focal points also referred to the Public Affairs Section of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information as the bodies responsible for coordination on peace and security issues. The annual meeting organized by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information for the chiefs of public information at field-based missions was also referenced by the focal points as being a good opportunity to network and coordinate on specific issues. The Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations coordinated activities formally through the jointly chaired Public Information Working Group, which meets twice monthly for planning and trouble-shooting and in order to reach agreement on approaches to mid- and long-term peace and security issues, as well as the coordination of communications in the event of crisis.

51. Focal points also indicated that coordination with the Department of Public Information and other Secretariat entities occurred on an "as needed" basis. Two main tools were used to facilitate Secretariat-wide public information coordination: the annual communications priorities and campaigns circulated by the Department of Public Information, which entities implemented, as feasible, given work demands and plans; and liaison with senior management offices, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General. In addition, daily morning meetings were held by the Communications and Speechwriting Unit of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General with various attendees, including substantive departments as necessary, the Spokesperson and staff of the Department of Public Information. These meetings were further enhanced by "network" meetings on various topical issues, as necessary, based on planned events, for example the referendum in the Sudan.

**Other ad hoc informal coordination provided a source for information sharing and lessons learned**

52. All focal point interviewees noted that additional informal coordination occurred based on personal relationships with other public information professionals both within the Secretariat and at other entities of the United Nations system. Focal points noted that this informal coordination and networking was utilized for sharing information and lessons learned. Almost half of focal point survey respondents (46.5 per cent) were also aware of other coordination mechanisms, including working groups on specific substantive issues and specialized public information techniques.

**The United Nations Communications Group and ongoing Secretariat-wide coordination is perceived as efficient**

53. The coordination of public information activities organized formally by the United Nations Communications Group and informally within the Secretariat were perceived by focal points as being efficient, overall, with focal points giving the highest efficiency rating to both the Communications Group and Secretariat entities for ensuring a common message.

Table 5
**Degree of satisfaction with communications coordination by the United Nations Communications Group and entities of the Secretariat***
(Percentage)

| *Purpose of coordination* | *Efficiency of coordination by the United Nations Communications Group* | *Efficiency of coordination by the Secretariat* |
|---|---|---|
| Coordination prevents duplication of work | 60 | 61.9 |
| Helps save time | 63.3 | 62.8 |
| Ensures a common message | 80 | 73.8 |

*Source*: Focal point survey, OIOS public information review, 2010-2011.
* Data indicates that respondents indicated "strongly agreed" and "somewhat agreed".

## E. Coordination of public information activities was challenged owing to the wide scope of work undertaken by the United Nations, unclear public information roles and the lack of a strategic plan

54. All focal points surveyed and interviewed noted the vital role that public information played in ensuring a unified presentation of the work of the United Nations. It was noted, however, that the wide scope of work created challenges to efficient coordination since entities tended to focus on their respective mandates, as a result of which they took part in coordinating only campaigns related to broad topics or discrete, reoccurring issues such as international days.

55. Interviews with focal points and survey data also highlighted that the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Public Information vis-à-vis Secretariat entities were particularly unclear in terms of guidance and coordination. There was an assumption by focal points that the Department, as the main department that undertakes the public information function, had a coordinating role to play, but there was a lack of knowledge as to whether it in fact had such a mandate. As noted in section D above, a formal coordination authority has not been given to the Department of Public Information.

56. As regards the roles of senior officials in the field of public information at the United Nations, namely the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information and the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, it was unclear as to which position took the lead in this area. For example, the need to immediately connect to the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General in the event of crisis situations was well understood by all focal points, whereas there was no such urgent need in terms of contacting the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information. In addition, the placement of this Office within the Department of Public Information in terms of budgetary and administrative purposes did not help to clarify those roles. The Spokesperson is among those who engage closely with the Secretary-General.[11] The fact that the budget and the administration of the Office of the Spokesperson are under the Department of Public Information is not mirrored by the direction of priorities by the Under-Secretary-General of the Department, de facto control of operational work nor the Spokesperson's performance assessment. Without a clear alignment between resources, responsibilities and results, the current arrangement created a risk of ambiguity regarding lines of authority and accountability associated with the Office of the Spokesperson and the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General highlighted the difference between the role of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department and that of the Office of the Spokesperson, noting that the Under-Secretary-General, through the Department, takes the lead on broad public information policy covering the Organization as a whole, both in terms of its immediate and its longer-term focus, covering broader aspects of public information about global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations. The role of the Office of the Spokesperson is much more limited and more directly related to the needs of the

[11] In the 2009 job listing for the post of Spokesperson the post is described as being affiliated with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, with an express notation that the appointment of the Spokesperson is under the discretionary authority of the Secretary-General.

Secretary-General, that is, to be able to respond and to be seen as responding to and anticipating news developments as they break each day. In that respect, the Spokesperson is an important part of the Executive Office. The Executive Office recognized that there are arguments for and against the hybrid administrative placement of the Office as it exists, but noted that ultimately it is for the Secretary-General to decide what works best and to ensure that the arrangement runs smoothly, with both transparency and a clear understanding of the current working relationship that has, until the present time, been working in a very pragmatic way.

57. The lack of a strategic plan in the area of public information has also impeded the efficient coordination of overall activities. Focal points viewed the development of a strategic plan as a necessary coordination tool in determining the priorities and the vision of United Nations public information activities as well as in providing a framework for a common approach to the coordination of communications both at Headquarters and in the field. While the Department of Public Information noted that the Secretary-General's Policy Committee decision No. 2008/23 on United Nations communication provided a broad framework, it lacked specificity regarding priorities and focal points were unaware of it. With regard to the need for a strategic plan, the Department doubted that such a plan would assist the Organization to better respond to current needs. The Department proposed that, as recommended by the United Nations Communications Group itself, it should be integrated at the principal level, into the preparation of the semi-annual meetings of the CEB High-level Committee on Programmes as a means to linking United Nations policy and communications more closely.

## V. Conclusion

58. The public information function and its organizational framework have grown larger than the original department established for that role. At present there are 2,113 full-time posts (4 per cent of Secretariat staff) and nearly $50 million dollars in non-post resources directly devoted to the function. A vast array of activities have been undertaken by decentralized public information offices, providing key information on respective mandates and activities and constituting the critical link between the public and the United Nations, particularly at field-based missions where public support is critical.

59. While the coordination of public information was rated as being efficient overall, and its benefits acknowledged in terms of presenting a common message and "One United Nations", such coordination has remained largely informal within the Secretariat. Efficient coordination is challenged by differing mandates, the lack of clear direction and vision from senior leadership, and the unclear role and lack of coordination mandate of the Department of Public Information.

60. Given the breadth of the function Secretariat-wide, its dedicated resources and its critical role in communicating the goals and work of the Organization, several issues must be addressed, including: the role of the Department of Public Information in terms of coordinating the function within the Secretariat; the role of other entities in the Secretariat; priorities for coordinated activities; and the need for a strategic plan for public information and communications. Addressing these issues would contribute to increased coordination and efficiency of the function and its related resources across the Secretariat.

# VI. Recommendation

61. The Department of Public Information, taking into account the role of the Secretary-General in setting the vision and the priority issues of the Organization, should develop and present to the Committee on Information an action plan that considers the roles and responsibilities for coordination of the public information function in the Secretariat, including:

(a) The role of the Department of Public Information;

(b) The role of other Secretariat entities;

(c) Priorities of any coordination activities;

(d) The need for a strategic plan for public information and communications in the Secretariat that outlines a vision and broad priority issues of commonality and addresses the priorities and vision of the Secretary-General for the function;

(e) The need to maintain data on post and non-post resources with levels and funding sources dedicated to public information as presented in the present report.

**Paragraphs 19 to 31 and 46 to 57**

62. *The Department of Public Information does not agree that a strategic plan, as described in the OIOS recommendation, would allow the Organization to communicate more effectively. The current structure, which combines a long-term communications policy approved by the Secretary-General with shorter-term communications priorities and campaigns, presents a pragmatic, flexible approach. It allows the Organization to respond to both long-term mandates and breaking news. The Department also stated that, with regard to the need to maintain data on post and non-post resources, it is clearly beyond the purview of the Department to solicit information on public information resources from other Secretariat entities.*

63. *The Executive Office of the Secretary-General stated that the Department of Public Information needs dedicated resources to support the Executive Office in developing a strategic communications plan for executing the priorities of the United Nations.*

(*Signed*) Carman L. **Lapointe**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
25 July 2011

# Annex I

## Total number of public information posts in the Secretariat and related entities by level

The following table details post numbers and levels for public information at entities that follow United Nations rules and regulations and are subject to the oversight of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). There were no public information posts in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Political Affairs, OIOS, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, the United Nations Compensation Commission, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships. The resources analysed for the review were taken from: the regular budget for the biennium 2010-2011; the peacekeeping and support account budget for the period from 1 July to 30 June 2011; and the special political mission budgets for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2010.

(table on next page)

| | Number of posts by level | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *USG* | *D-2* | *D-1* | *P-5* | *P-4* | *P-3* | *P-2* | *P-1* | *GS* | *FS* | *NO* | *LL* | *UNV* | *Total*[a] |
| | **1** | **6** | **31** | **73** | **191** | **248** | **112** | **1** | **963** | **65** | **200** | **200** | **22** | **2 113** |
| Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | **1** |
| Department of Economic and Social Affairs | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | **1** |
| Department of Field Support | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | **1** |
| Department of Management | | | | | 1 | | | | 10 | | | | | **11** |
| Department of Political Affairs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **0** |
| Special political missions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **99** |
| BINUCA | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | | | **5** |
| BNUB | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 9 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | **17** |
| UNAMA | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 8 | | 9 | 1 | 17 | | | **44** |
| UNAMI[b] | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 8 | | 4 | | | **18** |
| UNIOGBIS | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 | 1 | | **5** |
| UNIPSIL | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | **1** |
| UNOWA | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | **1** |
| UNPOS | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | **3** |
| UNRCCA | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | **2** |
| UNSCO | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | | **2** |
| UNSCOL | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | **1** |
| Department of Public Information[c] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **782** |
| Headquarters[d] | 1 | 4 | 10 | 22 | 64 | 82 | 55 | | 246 | | | | | **484** |
| United Nations Information Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva[e] | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 14 | | | | | **26** |
| United Nations Information Service at the United Nations Office at Vienna[f] | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 5 | | | | | **11** |
| United Nations Information Centre at the United Nations Office at Nairobi | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 3 | | **6** |
| United Nations information centres[g] | | | 8 | 11 | 9 | 8 | | | | | 44 | 164 | | **244** |
| Field offices | | | | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | 7 | | **11** |

| | Number of posts by level | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *USG* | *D-2* | *D-1* | *P-5* | *P-4* | *P-3* | *P-2* | *P-1* | *GS* | *FS* | *NO* | *LL* | *UNV* | ***Total*** |
| Department of Peacekeeping Operations | | | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | | 2 | | | | | **8** |
| Peacekeeping missions[h] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **823** |
| MINURSO | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | **1** |
| MINUSTAH | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 2 | | 60 | 8 | 11 | | 8 | **104** |
| MONUSCO | | | 1 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 6 | | 178 | 12 | 17 | | | **237** |
| UNAMID | | 1 | | 2 | 8 | 15 | 1 | | | 16 | | | | **43** |
| UNFICYP | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 5 | | | | | **7** |
| UNIFIL | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 5 | 2 | 6 | | | **18** |
| UNMIK | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 9 | | | | 1 | **12** |
| UNMIL | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | | 38 | 5 | 3 | | 5 | **61** |
| UNMIS | | | 1 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 1 | | 115 | 12 | 21 | | | **167** |
| UNMIT | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 1 | | 18 | 4 | 13 | | 3 | **52** |
| UNOCI | | | | | 3 | 9 | | | 78 | 3 | 25 | | 3 | **121** |
| Department of Safety and Security | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | **2** |
| ECA | | | | 1 | 2 | 4 | | | | | 5 | | | **12** |
| ECE | | | | 1 | | | | | 3 | | | | | **4** |
| EOSG | | 1 | | 2 | 2 | | | | 2 | | | | | **7** |
| ESCAP | | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | 5 | | | | | **9** |
| ECLAC | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 5 | | | | | **8** |
| ESCWA[i] | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | 1 | | | **5** |
| ICTR | | | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | | 12 | | | | | **21** |
| ICTY | | | | | 2 | 4 | 5 | | 15 | | | | | **26** |
| OCHA | | | | | 9 | 9 | 3 | | | | | | | **21** |
| ODA | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | **2** |
| OHCHR | | | | 1 | 4 | 8 | | | 8 | | 7 | | | **28** |
| OHRLLS | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | **2** |
| OICT | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | **1** |
| OSAA | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | **1** |
| UNCTAD | | | | | 2 | 3 | 1 | | 6 | | | | | **12** |
| UNEP | | | 1 | 2 | 14 | 9 | 7 | | 22 | | | | | **55** |
| UN-Habitat | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | | | 1 | | | **7** |
| UNHCR | | | 1 | 3* | 18 | 13 | 1 | | 57 | | 19 | | | **112** |
| UNODC | | | | 1 | | 1 | 3 | | 4 | | | | | **9** |

| | Number of posts by level | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *USG* | *D-2* | *D-1* | *P-5* | *P-4* | *P-3* | *P-2* | *P-1* | *GS* | *FS* | *NO* | *LL* | *UNV* | *Total*[a] |
| UNRWA | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | 25 | | **29** |
| Other Secretariat-related entities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **17** |
| UNCCD | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | | | | **4** |
| UNFCCC | | | 1 | 1 | | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | | | **12** |
| UNITAR | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | **1** |

*Source*: Compiled by OIOS based on data provided by entities.

*Abbreviations*: BINUCA, United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic; BNUB, United Nations Office in Burundi; CAAC, Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict; ECA, Economic Commission for Africa; ECE, Economic Commission for Europe; ECLAC, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; EOSG, Executive Office of the Secretary-General; ESCAP, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; ESCWA, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; FS, Field Service; GS, General Service; ICTR, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; ICTY, International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; LL, Local level; MINURSO, United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara; MONUSCO, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; MINUSTAH, United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti; NO, National Officer; OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; ODA, Office for Disarmament Affairs; OHCHR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; OHRLLS, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; OICT, Office of Information and Communications Technology; OSAA, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; UNAMA, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; UNAMI, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq; UNAMID, African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur; UNCCD, (secretariat of) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; UNFCCC, (secretariat of) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; UNFICYP, United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus; UN-Habitat, United Nations Human Settlements Programme; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNIFIL, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; UNIOGBIS, United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau; UNIPSIL, United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone; UNITAR, United Nations Institute for Training and Research; UNMIK, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo; UNMIS, United Nations Mission in the Sudan; UNMIT, United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste; UNOCI, United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; UNOWA, United Nations Office for West Africa; UNPOS, United Nations Political Office for Somalia; UNRCCA, United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia; UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; UNSCO, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process; UNSCOL, United Nations Special Coordinator for Emergency Relief Operations in Liberia; UNV, United Nations Volunteers; USG, Under-Secretary-General.

[a] To avoid double counting the total reflects subtracting the 3 posts at the United Nations Information Centre in Beirut that belong to the Department of Public Information.

[b] UNAMI and UNAMA are administered by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

[c] In addition to the 738 posts under the budget section for the Department of Public Information, it also provided an additional 44 posts from other budget sections that undertake public information functions, the Africa Section, Visitor Services and Income Sections at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. As a result of the additional 44 posts, the Office for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts stated that it was not possible to reconcile the numbers of posts and resources with the number reflected in the revised appropriation.

[d] Including 7 posts from the Africa Section; 33 posts from the Visitor Services and Income Sections.

[e] Including 3 posts from the Visitor Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

[f] Including 1 post from the Visitor Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

[g] The Department of Public Information commented that this includes 72 non-public information staff. The posts from the United Nations Information Centre at the United Nations Office at Nairobi were removed from the overall count of information centres so that the United Nations Office posts could be represented separately.

[h] UNMOGIP did not provide a focal point.

[i] Three (3) posts at ESCWA are part of the budget of the Department of Public Information for the United Nations information centre in Beirut.

# Annex II

## Text of the comments received from the Department of Public Information, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts on the review

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) presents below the full text of comments received from the Department of Public Information, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts on the review contained in the present report. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee. The Department of Public Information and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General raised concerns regarding the recommendation on the strategic plan for public information and resources needed to undertake this effort. The Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts raised concerns regarding the number of public information posts in the Department of Public Information. The comments from all entities on the draft OIOS report have been incorporated, as appropriate, into the final report.

### A. Comments received from the Department of Public Information

We would like to extend our appreciation to the staff of OIOS for their efforts in the course of preparing this review. The outcome of the review emphasizes the importance of public information as a key component of the Secretariat's work. The Department of Public Information fully endorses the conclusion of the report that effective communication is critical to generating public support for the Organization. Accordingly, the Department feels that the resource level provided for public information should be commensurate with the central importance of communication to the work of the United Nations. Furthermore, the Department supports the current institutional arrangements for public information across Secretariat entities.

As the work of the Organization has grown, especially at the local level and through its field operations, so too has the work of public information professionals. In order to raise support for the priority issues of the Organization, communications professionals across the Secretariat have to interact with many different audiences and stakeholders, in multiple languages.

A rapidly changing communications and media environment and an explosion of new information and communication technologies provide enormous opportunities for the Secretariat to inform and engage new audiences. New, decentralized Internet and mobile-based platforms present challenges to old channels of communication, as well as to established ways of disseminating information. The information revolution, moreover, means that the demand for quality multimedia news products from the United Nations system is growing, and will continue to do so.

In order to meet the many challenges facing the communications field today, the United Nations needs a robust team of communications professionals, well-equipped to take advantage of today's media opportunities. The Department of

Public Information has a unique set of resources and expertise in television, radio, online news, social media, thematic campaigns and outreach projects to promote the work of the United Nations worldwide.

Please find below specific comments on the findings and recommendations contained in the report:

**Paragraph 57**

With regard to the decision of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee on United Nations Communications cited in the report, this policy was circulated to all senior managers Secretariat-wide. The Department agrees that this decision should be made more widely available to all communications focal points in the Secretariat. In the view of the Department, an approach based on the United Nations Communications Group as a coordination mechanism and an information-sharing forum, a set of agreed-upon communications priorities and the Policy Committee decision is a more effective way to develop specific communications strategies on an ongoing basis than the attempt to draft a singular strategic plan. The Department has serious doubts that such a plan would assist the Organization to better respond to current needs. The Department proposes that the United Nations Communications Group, at the principal level, be integrated into the preparation of the semi-annual meetings of the High-Level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) as a means to linking United Nations policy and communications more closely, as recommended earlier by the Communications Group.

**Paragraph 61**

As noted above, the Department does not agree that a strategic plan, as described in the recommendation, would allow the Organization to communicate more effectively. The current structure, which combines a long-term, Secretary-General-approved communications policy with shorter-term communications priorities and campaigns, presents a pragmatic, flexible approach. It allows the Organization to respond both to long-term mandates and breaking news.

With regard to the need to maintain data on post and non-post resources, it is clearly beyond the purview of the Department to solicit information on public information resources from other Secretariat entities.

## B. Comments received from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General

1. Further to the initial comments of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General submitted on 15 July 2011, please find below (and as previously indicated) a further submission from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General with regard to the administrative concerns outlined in paragraph 56 of the review.

2. With respect to paragraph 56 of the final draft report, it would seem there is a perception that the roles of the Department of Public Information and the Spokesperson's Office are unclear. If this is the perception, then, irrespective of the facts, we need to do something to explain the difference.

3. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information, through the Department, takes the lead on broad public information policy covering the Organization as a whole, both in terms of its immediate and its longer-term focus. This covers the broader aspects of public information about global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations.

4. The role of the Office of the Spokesperson is much more limited. It is directly related to the needs of the Secretary-General to be able to and to be seen as responding to and anticipating news developments as they break each day. The Spokesperson's responsibility, thus, is:

- To respond to and anticipate breaking news developments;
- To brief the Secretary-General on news developments and how he should respond, and to secure the guidance necessary for that;
- To handle media inquiries relating to the Secretary-General and the United Nations more broadly, either directly or by ensuring that the right entity within the United Nations responds.

5. Given this requirement, it is of course natural that the Spokesperson and the Office of the Spokesperson should have a direct conduit to the Secretary-General and the Executive Office because of the real time and direct responsibility the Office has both in the management of the public responses of the Secretary-General to issues he faces each day, as well as their impact on the image of the Organization.

6. In this respect, the Spokesperson is an important part of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. It would, however, be inaccurate to speak of any "cabinet". Indeed the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Public Information is a member of the Senior Management Group and is a frequent commentator in that group as well as at the Secretary-General's Senior Advisers' meetings.

7. However, the Spokesperson, due to the demands of his office, is required to be among the first persons to meet with the Secretary-General each day, both to brief him of the breaking news stories as well as to take directions on how he should respond to questions from the media.

8. The question of where the Office of the Spokesperson should sit administratively is not new. His link with both the Department of Public Information and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General are critically necessary. There are arguments for and against the hybrid arrangement that exists, but ultimately it is for the Secretary-General to decide what works best in any given situation. The most important factor is to ensure that the arrangement works smoothly and that there is both transparency and a clear understanding of the working relationships between the two in real terms. With the new trio of directors in the Department of Public Information, this arrangement is working smoothly and in a very pragmatic way. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department has made a point of including the Office of the Spokesperson in all stages of the budget discussions that affect his functioning.

9. Clearly, the role of the Department of Public Information goes far beyond the very targeted responsibilities of the Office of the Spokesperson, as outlined on its website page:

"As the public voice of the United Nations, the Department of Public Information promotes global awareness and greater understanding of the work of the United Nations, using various communications tools including radio, television, print, the Internet, videoconferencing and, increasingly, other new information technologies. The United Nations website is one of the main sources of information about the activities of the Organization. The website is managed by the Department of Public Information. The United Nations News Centre features the latest news from the United Nations and the Secretary-General. Field reports, news and feature programmes on peacekeeping and humanitarian affairs are a staple of United Nations radio programmes. Unifeed enables news providers to cover important global issues by offering timely broadcast-quality video from throughout the United Nations system. United Nations publications is the source for titles produced by the United Nations and its key agencies. UN Works is an innovative multimedia platform that puts a human face on the work of the United Nations by exploring global issues through the personal stories of people and their communities. All these are managed by the DPI. Along with its global network of information centres, the Department of Public Information works with media, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations in bringing the core messages of the United Nations to people around the world."

10. For ease of reference, please also see below the comments of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on the draft report, which were submitted on 15 July 2011:

**Paragraph 51**

The name of the unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General is Communications and Speechwriting Unit.

**Paragraph 56**

Reference to the Spokesperson being a member of the Secretary-General's "cabinet" may be misleading. There is no official designation of or use of the word "cabinet". It should be sufficient to delete the term and the sentence to read: "The Spokesperson is among those who engage closely with the Secretary-General."

**Paragraph 61**

The fourth bullet disregards the role of the Secretary-General in setting "vision and broad priority issues" for the Organization. Outlining a vision and setting broad priority issues is the Secretary-General's role. The Department of Public Information needs dedicated resources to support the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in developing a strategic communications plan for executing those priorities.

11. I hope that OIOS will find these comments helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further clarifications or queries on this matter.

(*Signed*) Parfait **Onanga-Anyanga**
19 July 2011

## C. Comments received from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts

I wish to reiterate the comments sent by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts to OIOS in an e-mail from Ms. Helene Thorup-Hayes, dated 24 May 2011, with regard to the concern that the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts has about the number of public information posts in the Department of Public Information, as reflected in tables 1, 2, 3, and annex I, as well as non-post resources in paragraph 31, of the final OIOS report.

It is of concern to the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts that OIOS appears to be providing information in the final report based on its internal calculation of costs related to the posts as well as figures and numbers provided by the Department of Public Information. The Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts wishes to reiterate that it is not possible to reconcile these numbers of posts and resource levels with the number reflected in the revised appropriation.

The Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts is pleased to note that its comments with regard to paragraphs 26 and 66 of the draft report have been taken into consideration.

(*Signed*) Jun **Yamazaki**
20 July 2011